1:Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
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entirely in caves; trading places called *wadia* near the caves, but out of sight of them, under a tree or rock, were used for bartering, where all strangers would stop and shout and then wait until their calls had been answered from the caves.

The Veddas were extremely jealous of their women, and intimate as our informant was with them as a young man, he was never taken to their caves while their women were there. The wilder Veddas could not count, at least they used no numerals beyond one, the method being to say "one" "and one" "and one," etc., probably putting a piece of stick on the ground or making a mark for each unit mentioned. Both hands with fingers extended were held up for ten, or perhaps for any number above six. The "silent trade" was only a tradition even among the wildest Veddas and had probably been extinct in this part of the country for at least two generations. The wilder Veddas had no areca nuts but chewed the bark of trees mixed with lime which they obtained by burning land shells which they called *wantalo*.

Cousin marriage took place, the unions being arranged by the parents of the young people. Honey, dried venison and flesh of the monitor lizard were brought by the young man to the girl's father[1], who would call his daughter and give her in charge of her husband, for whom she would immediately make a waist string (*dia lanuwa*). She made no pretence of running away from her husband. Widows married an unmarried brother of their first husband if this were possible, in any case they might remarry and their sexual morality was as high as that of unmarried girls.

The wilder Veddas of the district belonged to the Morane and Unapane *warige*; each clan had its own set of caves, though, since their members intermarried, there could have been no rigid exclusiveness about the arrangement. There were people of Uru *warige* at a little distance; their status was lower than that of the Morane and Unapane folk, neither of whom would marry into this clan, and it was even said that the men of

[1] It was not clear whether more than one formal present of food was made; it must be remembered that a youth always gives part of any important kill to his potential father-in-law, cf. p. 67.

1:Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
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614 554 Uru *warugé* should carry game and honey for the men of Morane and Unapane.

291 184 Some of the village Veddas of those days had cloth, and when dancing to the *yaku* they wore the long cloth garment called *kangalla*; the wilder Veddas had no cloth and wore leaves, but it was not clear whether they had not also a certain amount of bark cloth which was their ordinary covering, and leaves may have been worn in addition when they invoked the *yaku*[1].

685 609 778 826 The old man knew of the custom of a man keeping a piece of human liver in his betel pouch; it was universal and in his young days every Vedda desired to have a piece. Strangers, even Veddas, who intruded on the hunting grounds would be killed and their liver taken, no other part of the dead man being used, and the custom gave rise neither to warfare nor to vendettas[2].

764 768 Caves in which a death occurred were deserted, the corpse being covered with leaves; perhaps men very near dissolution were left before death had actually occurred, but this did not seem certain. Bones found in the cave when the group returned to it after an interval of some ten or twelve years were thrown away quite carelessly. The spirits of the dead became the Nae Yaku who, with Kande Yaka and Bilindi Yaka, gave game and prosperity. The *kirikoraha* ceremony was performed for the Nae Yaku, and *adukku* (cooked food), which even in the old days consisted of coconut and rice, was offered to them. The wilder Veddas gave nothing to the Buddhist priests and made no offerings at shrines, nor did they know the Kataragam God, Kanda Swami, though the village Veddas worshipped him and knew that Walliame had been taken to wife by him, and honey was presented to the goddess at certain shrines, especially one at Kokote Sila, frequented by the village Veddas.

775 769 771 184

535 751 A few of the village Veddas would dance for the Sinhalese in order to protect their cattle, bring prosperity to their villages, and secure them from epidemics; they would dance *kolamaduwa* which the old man pointed out was derived from a

[1] Cf. p. 213.
[2] For details of this custom see Chapter VIII.

1:Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
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CHAPTER III

SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

GENEALOGIES.

THE genealogies on the next two pages show the relationship existing between the various individuals of the three Vedda communities, which still retain enough of the old Vedda mode of life to make a study of their organization valuable. At the first glance it is obvious that these genealogies do not go back beyond the memory of middle-aged men of the present day. We are convinced that this is due, not to any general distrust of our inquiries, but simply to certain peculiarities of the Vedda habit of thought which is directly dependent on their mode of life. The first of these is the extraordinary lack of memory shown by every Vedda for the names of individuals of more than one generation older than himself. This may perhaps be due to the fact that the number of individuals whom any one knows well is really small, being necessarily limited to the community to which he himself belongs. The genealogies show how small are these communities and, since every Vedda should marry a first cousin, marriage does little or nothing to enlarge the number of his connections. Further, each of the people with whom he comes in contact is related to him in a definite manner and is called and spoken of by a definite kinship term, so that personal names come to play a very small part in the daily life of the Veddas. It is this, doubtless, that has led to the frequent persistence of the baby names Tuta and Tuti, "little one" in its male and female forms, as the only names by which many individuals are known, and this together with the number of children called by

[p. 59] [text continues on p. 62]

1:Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
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601 relationship is a late form of the kind known as classificatory. Further, since the Vedda system closely resembles the Sinhalese the one may have been borrowed from the other.

Mutta, father, grandfather.
Atta, mother, grandmother.
Puta or *tuta*, son, sister's son (fem. loq.), brother's son (m. loq.).
Duwa or *tuti*, daughter, sister's daughter (fem. loq.), brother's daughter (m. loq.).
Munubura, grandson.
Miniberi, granddaughter.
Aiya, elder brother, maternal aunt's son, paternal uncle's son.
Maiya, younger brother, maternal aunt's son, paternal uncle's son.
Akka, elder sister, daughter, paternal uncle's daughter.
Naga, younger sister, maternal aunt's daughter, paternal uncle's daughter.
Mama, maternal uncle, paternal aunt's husband.
Nendamma, paternal aunt, maternal uncle's wife.
Lokuappu, paternal uncle (older), maternal aunt's husband.
Kuduappu, paternal uncle (younger), maternal aunt's husband.
Lokuamma, maternal aunt (older), paternal uncle's wife.
Kuduamma, maternal aunt (younger), paternal uncle's wife.
Hura, paternal aunt's son, maternal uncle's son.
Naena, paternal aunt's daughter, maternal uncle's daughter.
Baena, sister's son (m. loq.), brother's son (fem. loq.).
Yeli, brother's daughter (fem. loq.), sister's son (m. loq.).

It will be noticed that none of these terms, except *hura* and *naena* when used between individuals of the same sex, are reciprocal.

582 601 The working basis of the Vedda kinship system is the marriage of the children of brother and sister, but not of two brothers or sisters. Thus, when a woman's son marries his mother's brother's daughter the man's maternal uncle (*mama*) becomes his father-in-law and his maternal uncle's children (his *hura* and *naena*), except the girl he has married, become his brothers-in-law and sisters-in-law. None of these relatives, however, change their kinship term on this account, *hura* and *naena* being only applied to individuals with whom intermarriage is actually possible, or would be possible if the sex of the speaker permitted it. On marriage the girl's paternal aunt (*nendamma*) becomes her mother-in-law, but as before marriage this woman's children remain her *hura* and *naena*.

1;Seligmann & Seligmann E-S (1907-1908) 1911
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The words *lage eto*, *lato* or sometimes *leto*, the two last being abbreviations of *lage eto*, were often added to relationship terms; as examples of this we may record *mutta lage eto*, *atta lato*, *maleya leto*. We were told that the term in its various forms had the sense "of" or "from my own people," and it would only be used of near relatives, thus Poromala of Henebedda added some form of this word to the terms by which he called almost all his relations. This was not the case at Sitala Wanniya where Handuna (being then in our camp) said that he might use the term *maleya lage eto* when speaking of his brother who was up in the cave. 601

A man usually spoke of his wife as his "woman," *gani*. Addressing her he would probably say *thopi*, "thou." At Henebedda the term *meli* was used. We have no record as to how a Vedda woman of the Sitala Wanniya group addressed her husband; at Henebedda we were told that a childless woman addressed and spoke of her husband as *wani lage eto* but that after children were born he should be addressed (as among the peasant Sinhalese) as "father of so and so" using the name of the youngest child.

At Unuwatura Bubula it was said that not all *naena* and *kura* should marry, the correct marriage being for a man to marry the daughter of his mother's younger brother. We were not able to satisfy ourselves that this rule is especially observed at the present day. Of fifteen marriages between cousins—none of which are marriages of village Veddas—nine are marriages in which the man married his mother's brother's daughter, five are unions between a man and his father's sister's daughter, and one man married a woman who was equally his mother's brother's daughter and his father's sister's daughter, according to whether the relationship was traced on the mother's or father's side. 582

The number of cousin marriages of which we have details is too small to allow the definite statement that marriages between a man and his mother's brother's daughter were especially frequent, though as far as they go they support this idea, which becomes all the more probable when the specially close relationship existing between a man and his mother's brother (cf. p. 67) is considered.

1:Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
AX5 Vedda AX5

582 601 Since the children of two brothers or two sisters cannot marry each other, they are not *hura* and *naena* but call each other "brothers" and "sisters," using the terms for elder or younger brother or sister according to their age[1].

621 224 606 (Every Vedda so readily helps all the other members of his community and shares any game he may kill or honey he may take in so liberal a manner that at first it was difficult to determine who were the individuals who had a special claim on others of the group. Certainly at first sight it seemed as if all game were equally divided among the members of the group, but after a little time we perceived that while an unmarried man looked especially after his mother, a married man's father-in-law had at least an equal claim on his son-in-law and in practice often received more attention, since a man generally spent most of his time with his wife's family) That the relationship between 606 father-in-law and son-in-law is very close was shown in a number of ways, thus, when discussing children and their bringing up with Handuna of Sitala Wanniya, we asked him whether Veddas [842] preferred to have a son or a daughter, the answer was prompt and decided, "a daughter, for thus a man obtains a son-in-law"; and on another occasion when discussing relationship he stated very decidedly, *amma mama ekei*, mother and mother's brother (i.e. father-in-law) are alike, and pointed out that as a man treats

[1] It may be worth while to say something concerning the alleged intermarriage of brother and sister among the Veddas, since Bailey and Hartshorne believed that such marriages occurred, and the Sarasins considered further investigation advisable. Our conclusions agree so thoroughly with Nevill's that we feel that we need do no more than quote what he has written on this subject. "Much nonsense has been written by persons who ought to have known better, about marriage of Vaeddas with their sisters. Such incest never was allowed, and never could be, while the Vaedda customs lingered. Incest is regarded as worse than murder. So positive is this feeling, that the Tamils have based a legend upon the instant murder of his sister, by a Vaedda to whom she had made undue advances. The mistake arose from crass ignorance of Vaedda usages. The title of cousin with whom marriages ought to be contracted, that is, mother's brother's daughter, or father's sister's daughter, is *naga* or *nangi*. This in Sinhalese is applied to a younger sister. Hence if you ask a Vaedda, 'Do you marry your sisters?' the Sinhalese interpreter is apt to say, 'do you marry your naga?' The reply is (I have often tested it), 'yes—we always did formerly, but now it is not always observed.' You say then, 'What? marry your own sister naga?' and the reply is an angry and insulted denial, the very question appearing a gross insult; and if put by a Sinhalese, the Vaedda would probably not even reply to him, but turn away with a gesture of contempt." *Taprobanian*, Vol. 1, 1886, p. 178.

1:Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
AX5 Vedda AX5

614 793 *waruge* from the "Veddas" of Rotawewa—a rice-growing village in Sinhala Pattuwa of Tamankaduwa, the inhabitants of which say they are descendants from Veddas—although all accounts show that they are indistinguishable from their Sinhalese neighbours. "When Kuveni was abandoned by Vijaya she returned with her two children, a boy and girl, to her own people, who killed her. Her children fled to the jungle and lived on the fruits of the '*mora*' tree. One of their children came to Minneriya and founded the Minneriya (now Rotawewa) Veddas of the Morane Waruge." We have not visited these people but it may be assumed that they are at least as sophisticated as the "Veddas" of Yakure.

Unapane. Unapane *waruge* is an offshoot from Morane. A chief's daughter was given to another chief's son. When going to the bridegroom's cave the girl got thirsty on the way and the only water available was a minute trickle down the face of a rock. The man allowed this to soak into a piece of cloth which he squeezed into a bamboo from which the girl drank. This is the origin of the name from *una* "bamboo" and *pane* "water," and the descendants of this couple were called Unapane.

Uru. A Morane girl became pregnant and refused to give the name of her lover. She was beaten and driven away from the group and brought forth her child in a hole dug by a wild boar, *uru*, hence the name Uru *waruge*.

Aembala. Aembala *waruge* has sprung from Unapane. An Unapane girl's husband died while she was pregnant, and all her other relations were dead. When her child was born she left it under a tree while she went to dig yams. On her return she found that red ants (*aembaleo*) had blinded her child, whence the child was called Aembeli, and her descendants formed Aembala clan.

Namadewa. An Aembala woman brought forth a female child under a *namada* tree; this girl was therefore named Namadi and from her descendants arose the Namadewa clan.

582 611 Exogamy prevails among the Veddas of Bintenne and Tamankaduwa and clan descent is matrilineal. These conditions also prevail at Godatalawa and therefore must be assumed to have existed at Galmede whence the Godatalawa family had

1:Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
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come, but strangely this and the nearly related Sitala Wanniya Veddas were the only communities to the east of the Badulla-Batticaloa road in which exogamy prevailed. The Henebedda and Kovil Vanamai Veddas all married freely within the clan. It is, however, probable that this is a recent though not quite modern innovation, since at Henebedda it was said that it was particularly fitting that Morane and Unapane should intermarry.

Nevill recognised the existence of exogamy, and presumably it was of the Bintenne Veddas that he made the following very definite statement, which applies equally well to the condition of things existing at the present day, even among such sophisticated folk as those of Omuni, where genealogies were taken in order to make quite certain of this matter. "The rule for marriage was stringent. The daughter represents her mother's family, the son also represents his mother's family. In no case did a person marry one of the same family, even though the relationship was lost in remote antiquity. Such a marriage is incest. The penalty for incest is death. Thus the daughter must marry either her father's sister's son, or her mother's brother's son, neither of whom would be of the same clan name. Failing these she may marry any of their name, and should no such bridegroom be available, marriage into a third family becomes necessary[1]."

If the distribution of these Vedda communities in which exogamy prevails be studied on the map it will be seen that with the exception of the Sitala Wanniya and Godatalawa (Galmede) groups all the Veddas to the west of the Badulla-Batticaloa road are exogamous, whereas those to the east of the road contract marriage within the clan.

As a matter of convenience we now give a list complementary to that on pp. 71 to 74 showing what *waruge* were represented in each of the communities we visited. Danigala: Morane, Unapane, Namadewa (the last not acknowledged). Henebedda: Morane, Unapane, Namadewa (the latter properly forming the Kolombedda community and settlement). Kovil Vanamai (Bandaraduwa): Morane, Unapane, Uru (the latter forming the settlement at Uniche). In all these settlements marriage occurs within the clan.

[1] *Taprobanian*, Vol. 1, 1886, p. 178.

1:Seligmann & Seligmann E-8 (1907-1908) 1911
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614 **Sitala Wanniya.** The Sitala Wanniya people said that Morane and Unapane were the only *waruge* of which they had any first-hand knowledge. They had, however, heard that formerly three other *waruge* called Uru, Kabela and Aembala existed, and that the folk of these *waruge* were of lower status than the people of Morane and Unapane.

Godatalawa (Galmede). These people all belonged to Morane and Unapane *waruge*.

Unuwatura Bubula. The *waruge* of this settlement were Morane, Unapane and Bandara *waruge*. Exogamy was strictly adhered to, and the children took their mother's *waruge*. As far [582 611] as we could determine, all the poverty-stricken Veddas settled on chenas in the neighbourhood of Kallodi and Maha Oya on the Badulla-Batticaloa road belonged either to Morane, Unapane, Bandara (Rugam) or Uru *waruge*, the Morane and Unapane Veddas of the large chena settlement at Rerenkadi holding the last to be of inferior status.

Lindegala. Three men, the last remains of the Lindegala Veddas, visited us at Kallodi. The oldest of these, the possessor of the *aude* with inlaid silver work referred to on p. 171, was a rather tall stoutly built man who looked like a Sinhalese. He, however, remembered his *waruge* Morane and stated that his wife belonged to Bandara *waruge* and one of his companions who [611] belonged to this *waruge* had a wife belonging to Morane *waruge*. It was stated that children took their mother's *waruge*.

614 582 **Elakotaliya.** The *waruge* of this settlement are Namadewa, Uru and Rugam; exogamy was insisted on, and in all the nine marriages of which we have notes the contracting parties were of different *waruge*. In seven cases Uru and Namadewa *waruge* intermarried, in one instance Namadewa and Rugam *waruge*, while in the last instance the *waruge* of the woman was uncertain. Although it was clearly stated that the children should [611] take their father's *waruge*, it was certain that in some cases they took their mother's *waruge*.

It was said that a man should marry his father's sister's daughter and not his mother's brother's daughter but we could not establish this.

Kalukalaeba. Morane, Namadewa, Uru and Rugam *waruge*

1:Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
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are represented in this settlement. Although in conversation no importance was attached to exogamy this must be taken to exist since all of the ten marriages recorded are exogamous. These include six marriages of Morane with Namadewa *waruge*, two of Morane and Uru *waruge* and one each of Morane and Rugam *waruge* and of Rugam and Namadewa *waruge*. Children take their mother's *waruge*.

Yakure. The *waruge* existing here are Namadewa, Aembala, Bendia, Rugam and Tala. Uru *waruge* was known by name but not otherwise, Dehigama was recognised as belonging to the Uva Bintenne and Morane *waruge* as existing in the neighbourhood of Omuni. Exogamy was the rule and occurred in every marriage (8) of which we have records. *Waruge* descent should be in the female line but in some instances children took their father's *waruge*. Seeking to elucidate this matter it was said that whereas girls took their mother's *waruge* boys took their father's, but this rule certainly did not hold in all cases[1]. Cousin marriage was said to be the old custom, but it was admitted that at the present day this custom was more often neglected than observed.

Ulpota. This is said to be the most important of four small settlements of village Veddas in the neighbourhood of Dimbulagala (Gunner's Quoin). These settlements are Ulpota, Kohombolewa, Alagonagoda and Gonandamene all of which, according to Mutua our informant, consist of a small number (Kohombolewa eight, Gonandamene three) of huts. Mutua, who said that he was headman of the Tamankaduwa Veddas, gave the *waruge* of these settlements as Rugam, Aembala and Morane; the last being to his mind less numerous and less important than the others. The conditions as regards *waruge* descent and exogamy are the same as at Yakure. Of fifteen marriages recorded eleven are between individuals of Rugam and Aembala

[1] We may here refer to a statement made while we were investigating this matter at Yakure. "Properly speaking there are no *waruge* among the Veddas, who are only classified into *waruge* for the purpose of marriage." We could not determine what was in our informant's mind, and although we were subsequently told the same by the Ulpota Veddas we could not obtain any light on the subject from either community.

1;Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
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614 582 611

waruge, the remaining four between Morane and Aembala (2) or Rugam (2) *waruge*.

Dambani. These extremely sophisticated Veddas probably belong to Namadewa *waruge* and descent is probably matrilineal.

614

Malgode (Horaborawewa). Our informants knew of Namadewa, Dehigama and Kapatu *waruge* and no others, but when Morane *waruge* was mentioned to them one man stated that he had heard of a *waruge* of that name.

[582 611]

Girandura. Here too exogamy prevailed though children took their father's *waruge*, and we could discover no exception to these rules. The marriages we could trace took place between Dehigama and Namadewa *waruge*, and between Dehigama and Uru *waruge*, we consequently assume that these are the *waruge* represented in this community.

The Comparative Status of the Clans.

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The members of the Morane and Unapane clans generally considered themselves superior to the Namadewa, Uru and Aembala *waruge*. This feeling was so strong at Henebedda that much difficulty was at first experienced in collecting genealogies. Representatives of the Morane, Unapane and Namadewa clans were for the time living together at Bendiyagalge caves, and the difference in status between the Morane and Unapane on the one hand, and Namadewa on the other, was felt so strongly that the members of the last-mentioned *waruge* invariably denied their clan, while the Morane and Unapane folk said the Namadewa were their servants. It seemed clear that in the old days Morane and Unapane folk never married into one of the servile clans, but two or three such marriages had taken place within recent years, and in every case these marriages were at first denied. The most striking proof of this feeling was evinced when we had come to know all the members of the community and pretence had been largely given up; Sita Wanniya and Poromala our usual guides, both Morane men, led us one day to the Namadewa chena. The Namadewa men immediately began an angry protest. "These people," they said, meaning Poromala and Sita Wanniya, "call us Namadewa; it

[582]

1:Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
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which the food for the community was cooked, but we do not think they would touch it or assist in any way in the cooking. At Omuni a menstruous woman is isolated under a rough shelter where she is waited upon by a younger unmarried sister or cousin who, it was stated, should not herself have attained puberty. During her seclusion she may eat any food cooked at the ordinary fire, but a special platter is kept for her use. The girls who look after her suffer no restrictions. This happens every time a girl or woman menstruates.

Marriage takes place at an early age; it was said that girls sometimes married before puberty, and as we heard of this at Henebedda, Bandaraduwa, and Omuni, we see no reason to doubt the truth of the statement[1]. At Omuni it was pointed out that a certain amount of breast development was necessary before marriage, so that it is probable that connection does not antedate puberty by more than a short time.

With regard to the frequency of such child marriages, we can only say that we never saw any very young girls with babies. Perhaps at the present day prenuptial connection is more common than marriage between the very young, though it is obviously difficult to decide when prenuptial love-making between individuals destined for each other gives place to marriage, among people whose marriages are accompanied with but slight ceremony. It must be remembered that the marriage gift of landed or personal property to a son-in-law, which was formerly customary, is obsolescent at the present day, and this not only makes it more difficult to determine whether marriage has taken place, but probably actually tends to make the exact time of the assumption of the married state less clearly defined.

On account of these considerations we are unable to express any definite opinion as to the frequency of prenuptial connection, the few instances we heard of were between individuals occupying the relationship of *hura* and *naena*, who would in any case marry each other. Thus Kaira of Henebedda and his wife grew up in the same group, and as they had played together as

[1] We are indebted to Mr Frederick Lewis for the information that this is a common practice among Tamils.

1:Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
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836 children so they came together as they grew up. The community came to know of what had occurred, the couple were considered married, and now go about together. We were told that no resentment was felt or expressed by the girl's parents or the community, and there was no formal giving over of land or property to Kaira by his father-in-law, because, as was pointed out, the fathers of Kaira and Hudi both belonged to the same group and together moved about over the same land.

We think it may be said that among most Veddas at the present day, especially such as have come in contact with the Sinhalese, there is no violent feeling against prenuptial connection of the sort here described, but we believe that formerly public opinion was definitely and strongly against the practice, though on this point we do not attempt to dogmatise. There was no doubt as to the attitude of public opinion towards connection between people who were not allotted to each other. This was, and still is, strongly disapproved, and there is no doubt that in the old days the guilty parties risked their lives.
835 It was, however, clear that intrigues of this sort did sometimes
684 occur, and we heard of two instances of what are regarded as incestuous unions which occurred among the Kovil Vanamai Veddas some fifty or sixty years ago. In both cases the girls cohabited with their mothers' sisters' sons, and in both instances the guilty parties were promptly killed by the outraged group. The men were set upon in the jungle, their own fathers it was said taking a prominent part in the assault, while the girls were killed in the huts in which they were living[1].

582 As already mentioned the correct marriage among the Veddas, as among the Sinhalese, is for a man to marry his

[1] The matter has been well stated by Nevill who writing more than twenty years ago says: "The Vaeddas marry young, and are strict monogamists. Consequently the husband and wife are watchfully jealous, each of the other, and love-intrigues are few and far between. Nothing short of murder would content the injured party. This strict morality extends to unmarried girls, who are protected by their guardians with the keenest sense of honour" (*Taprobanian*, Vol. I, p. 178). We do not, however, agree even partially with his statement as to the considerable liberty allowed to widows, we believe that among the wilder Veddas their morality was as strict as that of the maidens and it must be remembered that it was, and is, unusual for any but old women to remain widows for any length of time.

1:Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
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father's sister's daughter. The children of two sisters or of two brothers could not marry, and such a connection would be considered incestuous. The man goes to his future father-in-law with a present of honey, yams, grain or dried deer's flesh tied to his unstrung bow which he uses as a carrying stick. Whether he generally repeats this visit or receives his bride immediately was not clear, and probably the custom varies in this particular. Handuna of Godatalawa told us that he did not take his bride away until he had twice taken a present of food to his mother's brother (father-in-law). The bride gives her spouse a waist string of her own making which he never removes until it is worn out, when he replaces it with another made by his wife. In these particulars the marriage ceremony was essentially similar fifty years ago when it was described by Bailey. "The bachelor Veddah who meditates matrimony, himself selects the lady of his choice, wisely preferring his own judgement to that of others; and providing himself with the greatest 'delicacies of the season,' for example, a pot of honey and a dried iguano, proceeds to her father's hut and states the object of his visit. There being no objection to the proposed alliance, the father calls his daughter, who comes forth with a cord of her own twisting in her hand. She ties this round the bridegroom's waist, and they are man and wife. The man always wears this string. Nothing would induce him to part with it. When it wears out it is the wife's duty to twist a new one and bind it round him[1]."

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When a girl married, her father usually made over to his son-in-law a tract of land, generally a hill known to be inhabited by colonies of the *bambara* or rock bee (*Apis indica*), or gave him a piece of personal property such as a bow or one or two arrows. The instances in which land was given are described in the section on land transference, so that here it is only necessary to mention instances in which personal property was given. Handuna received a bow and one arrow from his father-in-law who when presenting them accompanied his gift with the remark "With this bow you must get food for my daughter." Sometimes a dog is given, and Knox was certainly right when he

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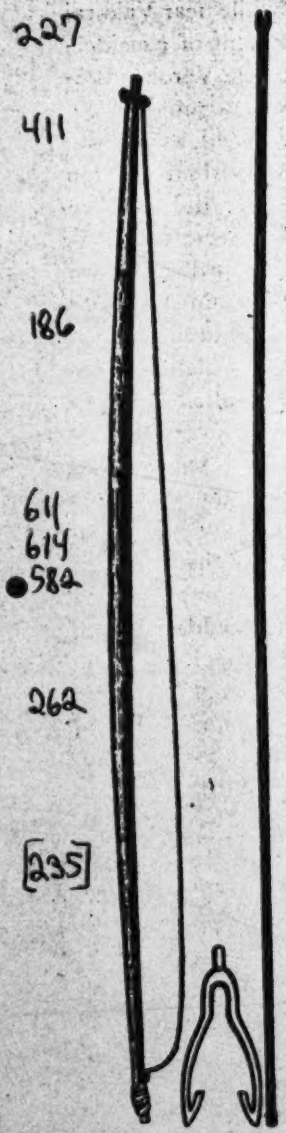
[1] J. Bailey, *op. cit.* p. 293.

1;Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
AX5 Vedda AX5



[113] Fig. 13. Verda bow and harpoon × 1/12. Iron harpoon head × 1/3.

fig. 2, while Mr Storey's book contains an excellent photograph of these people spearing fish[1].

The length of the Verda bow and harpoon shaft shown in fig. 13 are 208 cm. and 220 cm. respectively. The bow is an extremely powerful weapon, its diameter at its thickest part being about 3·3 cm.

In spite of the perfectly obvious fact that the majority of the Verdas are more Tamil than Vedda the old Vedda pride of blood survives and some of the older Verdas denied that they intermarried with Tamils.

Children of marriages in which the *waruge* of the contracting parties were known took their father's *waruge*, but it seemed to be a matter of no account whether or no individuals of the same *waruge* intermarried.

Everyone avoids eating fowl and all our informants both male and female denied that they ever ate it, though often suggesting that others might do so. On the other hand, one informant who bred fowls for sale summed the matter up with an emphatic "Veddas don't eat fowls." No reason was given for this abstinence but all agreed that their ancestors had not eaten fowl, though the majority of our informants admitted that they would breed fowls for sale and kill and prepare fowls for others to eat. Beef was said to be generally avoided though it was not

[1] *Hunting and Shooting in Ceylon*, London, 1907, p. 330.

2: Bailey G-5 (ca. 1854) 1863
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very careful in my inquiries on the subject. Had it existed, the neighbouring Singhalese would have had no hesitation in accusing them of it, but I could not obtain a trace of it. Tennent's remarks on this subject are wholly inapplicable to the wild Veddahs of Bintenne or Nilgala, though they may apply to those Veddahs of whom he writes.*

They never marry out of their race, and, with the very smallest cause, the men are exceedingly jealous of their most unattractive wives. They are very careful to keep them apart from their companions. Their huts contain but one family each, and when they live in caves, each dwelling-place is carefully screened off. There are as many as seventeen separate huts and caves among the seventy-two Veddahs of Nilgala; hardly more than four individuals to each habitation.

Polyandry is unknown among them. The practice is alluded to with genuine disgust. I asked a Veddah once, what the consequence would be if one of their women were to live with two husbands, and the unaffected vehemence with which he raised his axe, and said, "a blow would settle it," shewed conclusively to my mind, the natural repugnance with which they regard this national custom of their Kandyan neighbours. Their abstinence from a practice, which, till 1859, was recognized by the laws of the land, is remarkable. So sensitive are they on these subjects, that I know an instance of a Veddah—and he was by no means one of the wildest—drawing his knife, and being with difficulty restrained from using it, at a remark made in jest which he considered a reflection on the honour of their women.†

It is notorious that the Kandyans have no scruples with regard to divorce. Among them, husbands desert their wives, and wives their husbands, for any or no reason. Sickness is perhaps the most common cause. The heartless desertion of a sick wife is, I think, the worst trait in the Kandyan character, and the cool and unconcerned manner in which they themselves allude to it, shows that it is as common as it is cruel.‡

* Tennent, vol. ii, part ix, chap. iii, p. 444, 2nd edit.

† Tennent says, "The community is too poor to afford polygamy," but I am convinced that is not the cause of its non-existence. We find it in smaller communities than these.

‡ In a civil suit in the District Court some years ago, a witness said in reply to a question from me—"How can I tell how many wives he had? A woman is married to-day, and leaves her husband to-morrow. If the wife gets sick, the husband deserts her; if the husband, the wife deserts him." A young girl of sixteen or so once coolly confessed before me to having had five husbands, three of whom were living, and two present in court, of whom one had just attempted suicide for her sake! I met with an instance of a man who had been married fifteen times; and I have heard of a woman who had had thirteen husbands.

2: Bailey G-5 (ca. 1854) 1863
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V 585 291 bind it round him. Many a more civilised wife would rejoice if she could forge new fetters for her husband as binding as these. The utility of the string is simply to keep in its place the scanty rag which constitutes the Veddah costume.* Married or single he must wear one; but when he is married he substitutes for his batchelor's string one of the lady's twisting, and besides its use, it is emblematic of the marriage tie; for as he never parts with it, so he clings to his wife through life.†

V 5 582 835 I have spoken of the monogamy and conjugal fidelity of the Veddahs as favourably contrasting with the opposite practices among the Kandyans. But there was an ancient custom amongst them which has scarcely yet become extinct, a custom most revolting to every civilized mind. It is that which sanctions the marriage of a man with his younger sister. To marry an elder sister or aunt would, in their estimation, be incestuous, a connection in every respect as revolting to them as it would be to us—as much out of the question and inadmissible as the marriage with the younger sister was proper and natural. It was, in fact, *the* proper marriage, as much so as the marriage between the father's sister's son and the mother's brother's daughter is the most proper that a Kandyan can contract.‡

V 582 835 How far this practice has become obsolete it is hard to say. Amongst the Veddahs of Bintenne it has certainly ceased, and they now regard it with disgust.§ Still it has not very long died out, for many amongst them have seen the children of such marriages, and even cited some by name to me. But I question if it has yet disappeared from amongst the wilder Veddahs of Nilgala. For some time I believed that it was invariably practised there, and

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* It is, in fact, what the Singhalese call the Diya lanoowa, the "water-string," *i. e.*, the string which supports the rag of cloth which natives wear when bathing, and which is "full dress" among the Veddahs.

† The following anecdote is an apt illustration of the value set by a Kandyan on the marriage tie. One of the civil officers of the fort was travelling through his district, explaining the provisions of the new Kandyan marriage ordinance, when a native said to him—"I don't like that ordinance at all." "Why?" he asked. "Why, you tell us we are not to send away our wives, if we like. Now, suppose I bought a piece of rice land, *and afterwards found my wife did not know how to weed!*"

‡ "Every Bedouin has a right to marry his father's brother's daughter before she is given to a stranger; and hence "cousin" (bint' amm), in polite phrase, signifies "wife." Burton's *El Medina Mecca*, vol. iii. A Kandyan would regard such a marriage incestuous, for such first cousins are considered sisters. The term applied to such a female cousin as is mentioned in the text as the proper bride for a Kandyan is "nœna," which in Veddah dialect is the word for "wife." The corresponding word "noora" is the Veddah term for "husband."

V 5 [601]

§ Mr. Birch informs me that the Veddahs of the Batticaloa district "indignantly deny marrying their sisters."

2:Bailey G-5 (ca. 1854) 1863
AX5 Vedda AX5

it is only because, after repeated and careful inquiry, I cannot establish the fact of such a marriage now actually existing, that I am inclined to consider that it is becoming obsolete. But I should be almost justified as describing it as an existing custom, for many of the young men are the offspring of such connections. The practice is spoken of by them in the present tense, and alluded to as a matter of course, without the smallest repugnance.*

Amongst the Bintenne Veddahs, then, it may be said to have been, for perhaps two generations or so, extinct. Amongst those of Nilgala it is, at most, only becoming so. And it has, undoubtedly, been the custom among both from time immemorial. Utterly revolting as it is to us, we must remember that with them it was a custom sanctioned by the practice of ages. It is not the consequence of a "poor community," nor the growth of mere barbarism. If it were, the elder sister would be equally sought after; if it were, polygamy in all its forms would be found among them. There would, in fact, be no restraint.†

I have before described the short stature of the Veddahs—their weak and vacant expression, their striking resemblance to each other, characteristics much more marked upon the Veddahs of Nilgala than those of Bintenne. The practice I have just noticed is quite sufficient to account for these.

It might naturally be supposed that such marriages would produce, besides a stunted growth, insanity, idiocy, and epilepsy. But I find few traces of these maladies. Madness rarely occurs, idiocy still less frequently; though dogged stupidity is not at all uncommon amongst them.‡ But in other respects the injurious effects of this custom would seem to be plainly discernible. The

* I am not surprised that Tennent should be ignorant of this custom. It is a most difficult task to obtain intelligible answers to the commonest questions from these ignorant creatures; and unless a clue to some subject is accidentally found, the inquirer would learn little. There are practices as revolting, though not so peculiar, among some of the Indian tribes.

† It is curious that the only trace I can find of anything approaching to a belief in retributive justice is a tradition of a man, whose name even has been preserved, and whose family still exists, who, they say, was eaten by worms for having exceeded the authorized limit, and formed connections with his elder sisters and aunts. By whom this punishment was inflicted they do not pretend to say; but the painful death they regard as the direct consequence of his incest.

‡ Madness is by no means common among them. They believe if one man curse another, the man who is cursed becomes mad. This is evidently the same superstition as is common among the Singhalese, and known as the "Kata waha," "the evil mouth," or "poison of the mouth," equivalent to the prevalent faith in the "Ess waha," "the evil eye," or "poison of the eye." Burton, in his *El Medinah Mecca*, says, "the national type has been preserved by systematic intermarriages. No evil results are anticipated from the union of first cousins; and the experience of ages and of a nation may be trusted."

4:Lewis N-5 (ca. 1906-1918) 1919
AX5 Vedda AX5

of the bark of the Ritti (*Antiaris toxicaria*) for males, and a sort of leaf-skirt for the females.

No jewellery was worn by the males or females. Sometimes a necklace made of shells ("Bellan") was worn by the younger females, but such things as rings were unknown to the earlier Veddas.

They had no idea of time beyond the subdivision of the 24 hours into two divisions, viz., that of light and darkness. Other than this there was no computation except a man's knowledge of a certain striking event that happened in his "small time," but how long ago that was could not be stated.

The taking of a woman to wife required mainly the sanction of the girl's father, after which a few exchanges might be made in signification of the consent of parties. After this the man and woman lived together, while before they would not so much as dare speak to one another in public, unless related.

The age of the woman was invariably extremely youthful at the time of her "marriage," and even at the present day, notwithstanding the comparative civilization of the modern Vedda descendants, youthful marriages still prevail.

I found in response to my inquiries in all parts of the Vedda country that I visited, that 12 years was a common age for a girl to be taken to wife at. In one village I was present at an inquiry by a headman into a case where the girl was only 8. In this case the headman expressed the opinion that the marriage was "very bad."

My informant told me that with the Veddas there was no custom for the woman, when about to give birth to a child, to go to a separate house or hut for the purpose, but that this custom had only come in later.

Among the Veddas there was no such thing as prostitution, nor could I learn that there was polyandry.

The bearing age of women would be at about 14, that of puberty being a year earlier.

Women would have children up to about 28, and as might be expected from the condition of youthful cohabitation for one or two years prior to puberty, the proportion of males and females in a family would be pretty nearly equal. On

291
301
[582]
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Wedded children. (Page 65)

Kaira and his wife. (Page 65)

[facing p. 65]

8: Spinal D-8 (ca. 1920) 1948 AX5 Vedda AX5

these Veddas. Bingoda is not all Vedda; essentially it is a Sinhalese 131
shone village of about six or eight families, within a stone's throw of
which are the crude huts belonging to the few surviving Veddas. Through 361
a tangle of overgrown scrub we reach them; they are not so numerous
that we cannot easily name every single Vedda there.

Three we have met before, Suthubanda, Gama and Badapissa; it 101
was they who led us such a chase at Galmede. In the first hut we find 161
the swarthy Gama and his comely young wife Kalu—his fifth experiment
in matrimony: and he barely twenty-five! Not far from this is Suthu- [587]
banda's abode, in which are his wife, the skinny Thuthi, mother by
previous marriage of Gamma; their two little boys, Handuna and Naida
and girls Kumi and Punji. Handuna is the quaintest brat imaginable; 855
he is ash-coloured from top to toe, through crouching by the hearth all
night to keep warm his naked body; for, all he has for cover is a little
strip of loin cloth drooping erratically from a slack waist-string that sags
well below his nates; his rotund abdomen accommodates an enormous [164
spleen; with hands crossed over shrugged shoulders to keep the chill 516]
away he gazes quizzically at you.

Away from these two homes, across the stream, is the only other Vedda 361
hut. Unlike those of Suthubanda and Gama which are of wattle and [194
dust, this is a sadly dilapidated mud structure once occupied by a Moor.
It is the most pathetic and curious menage here, and belongs to Kaira 342]
brother of Suthubanda. His wife Randunna, a hideous squint-eyed
thing, is mother by a previous husband to Heenthuthi the twelve-year 101
old wife of Badapissa (Muthua), Kaira's younger brother! A more 161
ridiculous pair it would be hard to find: the wife a mere child, the husband [582]
barely more. The Veddas favour such early marriages, saying that,
growing up thus together, the two learn to love each other well. Be
that as it may, it does seem a most piteous travesty of human matings.
Huddled by the hearth and shivering with ague, is old Thanthi mother
of the clan, and wife of the dead chief Neela. And, lastly, we have here [164]
the most pathetic figure in all Bingoda—Kummi, a girl of fifteen, dust-
besmeared, ulcerated, crippled, and so scantily clad that she is ashamed
to stand lest she reveal her nakedness. A misery to herself and others, she
sits apart with face shyly lowered, taking timid glances every now and
then, like some wild thing, from large black lustrous eyes that might
have shone befittingly on the face of some proud beauty.

To these, though they now dwelt apart at Mullegama, we must add
Kaurala and his family, for he too was of Bingoda, and is maternal uncle
of Suthubanda. By his two wives, Balli and Ranni, he has four little
sons, Kaira Vanniya, Heratha, Kalua and Sela; and two daughters,
Rassi and Dingi.

These details, though perhaps tedious, serve to bring out vividly the
intimate inter-relationships of the Veddas, their apparent disregard of
appearance or age in their choice of wives, the promiscuity of life in their
one-roomed homes—mother, child and father all lying huddled together [545
in a little space. For all that it must not be assumed that Veddas are 586]
devoid of a moral code. A man may have more than one wife, it is true;
and, if it pleases him, he may cast her aside like a worn garment; but to
each man his own woman while she is his; that is the Vedda law which
all respect.

5: Spinel D-5 (ca. 1920) 1945 AX5 Vedda AX5

582 The correct Vedda marriage is that between the children of a brother
835 and sister. A marriage between children of two brothers or of two sisters is regarded as incest. And here their standard is higher than ours.

587 Marriage for the Vedda is a very simple affair. Suthubanda, for instance, espoused a widow in his household. When she was freed by the death of her husband, it was right that he should take her, and he made no demur, though she was old and ugly and he young and robust.
583 Kaurala went to the younger of his two wives with a length of cloth, a bead necklace, a bangle and two hair pins, and brought her away. Gama, whose wife was an orphan of Henebedde, did much the same. But
591 the rule is that a man should cast in his lot with his wife's people. Then, the morning after marriage the pair go into the jungle and bring home, it may be a *kanava* comb, a monitor lizard, or some yams, and thus the common life begins.

585 The waist-string plays as important a part in Vedda matrimony as
291 does the ring in ours. When a woman has tied round the waist of a man a string of her own twisting, he becomes her husband. This string, some
[283 six encircling loops, lasting practically a life-time, is made of *niyande*
824 (bow-string hemp), the long bayonet-shaped leaf of which is shredded to fibre by being drawn repeatedly between the palm of the hand and a bare branch.

586 Divorce is as informal as marriage; the woman being merely returned to her parents or requested to go to whomsoever she chooses. But the Vedda is not, as a rule, unreasonably capricious in the exercise of his power; he has too great a sense of responsibility and of fair-play towards
762 the mother of his children and partner in his toil. A lad I knew blew out his chest with a gun, from remorse at having taken to himself two sisters who continually quarrelled with each other over his affections.

593 A Vedda will not hesitate to chastise his spouse when necessary; but that, after all, is only a mark of affection! We saw one belabour his wife unmercifully because she would not let him accompany us; she took all the beating she got, but had her own way in the end.

551 These people do not address their women-folk by name. Ask a man to
515 name his children, and he will stutter and stumble at the task. A Vedda hails his wife somewhat as follows: "What are you doing there? Come here and break my head." This apparently suicidal request is only his way of requesting her to perform the delightful uxorial duty of cleansing his hair of vermin.

614 The Veddas of Bingoda claim to be of the Morana *waruge*, the best
565 Vedda clan. Those of Danigala, of the Unapane clan, come next. But
515 for the Veddas of Henebedde the Bingoda folk profess disdain, calling them *Uvo* (swine) and *Waliyo*, and saying it was their duty in old-time to pour water on the Morana's hands when they had fed. How much water these Moranas themselves use we have yet to learn; for, if the saying be true, that the worse the odour the better the Vedda, then the Veddas of Bingoda are aristocrats. What a thing is human nature after all, when even this wretched little remnant of humanity, without a rag to their bodies claim social precedence over each other?

614 There are nine Vedda clans or *waruges*; and each has its own story:
173 The Morana *waruge* was so called by a Sinhalese king who yearned for the *mora* fruit when it was out of season, and had his want proclaimed.